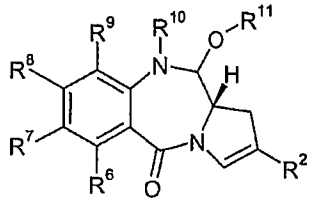
CLAIMS

1. A compound of formula I:



I

and salts, solvates and chemically protected forms thereof, wherein:

R^6 and R^9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C_{1-12} alkyl, C_{3-20} heterocyclyl and C_{5-20} aryl groups;

R^7 and R^8 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo,

or the compound is a dimer with each monomer being of formula (I), where the R^7 groups or R^8 groups of each monomers form together a dimer bridge having the formula -X-R"-X- linking the monomers, where R" is a C_{3-12} alkylene group, which chain may be interrupted by one or more heteroatoms and/or aromatic rings, and each X is independently selected from O, S, or NH;

or any pair of adjacent groups from R^6 to R^9 together form a group $-O-(CH_2)_p-O-$, where p is 1 or 2;

R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group;

R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group; and

R^2 is a labile leaving group.

2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^9 is H.

3. A compound according to either claim 1 or claim 2, wherein R^6 is selected from H, OH, OR, SH, NH_2, nitro and halo.

4. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein R^{10} is Troc.

5. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein R^{11} is a silyl oxygen protecting group or THP.

6. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein R^2 is triflate.

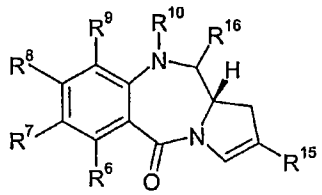
7. A compound according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein R^7 and R^8 are independently selected from H, OH, OR, SH, NH_2, NHR, NRR' and halo.

8. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the compound is a dimer with each monomer being of formula (I), where the R^7 groups or R^8 groups of each monomer form together a dimer bridge having the formula $-O-(CH_2)_n-O-$ linking the monomers, where n is from 3 to 12.

9. A compound according to claim 8, wherein n is from 3 to 7.

10. A compound according to either claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the substituents R^8 join to form the dimer bridge.

11. A compound of formula **III**:



III

and salts, solvates, chemically protected forms and prodrugs thereof, wherein:

R^6 and R^9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C_{1-12} alkyl, C_{3-20} heterocyclyl and C_{5-20} aryl groups;

R^7 and R^8 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo,

or the compound is a dimer with each monomer being of formula (I), where the R^7 groups or R^8 groups of each monomers form together a dimer bridge having the formula -X-R"-X- linking the monomers, where R" is a C_{3-12} alkylene group, which chain may be interrupted by one or more heteroatoms and/or aromatic rings, and each X is independently selected from O, S, or NH;
or any pair of adjacent groups from R^6 to R^9 together form a group $-O-(CH_2)_p-O-$, where p is 1 or 2;
R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group; and
R^{16} is either $O-R^{11}$, wherein R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group, or $O-R^{11}$ is OH; or
R^{10} and R^{16} together form a double bond between N10 and C11;
R^{15} is R;
and wherein,
when R^7 and R^8 are OMe, R^6 and R^9 are H, and where R^{10} and R^{16} together form a double bond between N10 and C11, R^{15} is not phenyl, 4-methylphenyl, 2-methylphenyl, 4-ethylphenyl, 2,6-dimethylphenyl, 4-methoxyphenyl, 4-tert-butylphenyl, 4-fluorophenyl, 4-chlorophenyl, 2-naphthyl or 2-thiophenyl.

12. A compound according to claim 11, wherein when R^7 and R^8 are OMe, R^6 and R^9 are H, and R^{15} is R, R is selected from the group 3-methoxyphenyl, 4-biphenyl, 4-phenoxyphenyl, 3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl, trans-2-(4-methylphenyl)vinyl, trans-propenyl, 4-dimethylaminophenyl, 4-methylthiophenyl, 4-vinylphenyl, 3,4-dichlorophenyl, 4-trifluoromethylphenyl, 4-isopropylphenyl, 4-cyanophenyl, 3-pyridinyl, 4-pyridinyl, 4-formylphenyl, 4-carboxylphenyl, 2,6-dimethoxyphenyl, 4-acetanilide, 4-aminophenyl, 1-naphthyl, 5-indole, 3-aminophenyl, 2,6-difluorophenyl, 1-pyrenyl, 4-hydroxyphenyl and trans-hexenyl.

13. A compound according to either claim 11 or claim 12, wherein when R^7 and R^8 are OMe, R^6 and R^9 are H, and R^{15} is R, R is selected from a C_{3-20} heterocyclyl group having a nitrogen ring atom, C_{5-20} aryl group having a nitrogen-containing substituent, or a C_{5-20}

heteroaryl group having a nitrogen ring atom or a nitrogen-containing substituent.

14. A compound according to claim 11, wherein the compound is a dimer with each monomer being of formula (I), where the R^7 groups or R^8 groups of each monomer form together a dimer bridge having the formula $-O-(CH_2)_n-O-$ linking the monomers, where n is from 3 to 12.

15. A compound according to claim 14, wherein n is from 3 to 7.

16. A compound according to either claim 14 or claim 15, wherein the substituents R^8 join to form the dimer bridge.

17. A compound according to any one of claims 14 to 16, wherein R^{15} is selected from:

(i) optionally substituted C_{5-20} aryl groups;

(ii) substituted C_2 alkyl groups; and

(iii) optionally substituted C_{3-7} alkyl groups.

18. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 17, wherein R^{10} and R^{16} together form a double bond between N10 and C11.

19. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 18, wherein R^9 is H.

20. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 19, wherein R^7 and R^8 are independently selected from H, OH, OR, SH, NH_2, NHR, NRR' and halo.

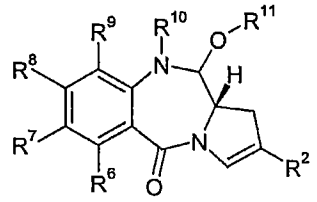
21. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 20 for use in a method of therapy.

22. A pharmaceutical composition containing a compound of any one of claims 11 to 20, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

23. Use of a compound according to any one of claims 11 to 20 in the manufacture of a medicament for treating a proliferative disease.

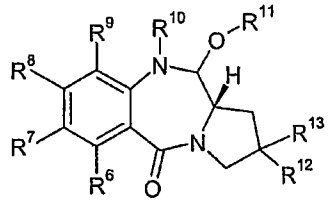
24. A method of treatment of a proliferative disease, comprising administering to a subject in need of treatment a therapeutically-effective amount of a compound of any one of claims 11 to 20.

25. A method of synthesising a compound of formula **I**:



I

from a compound of formula **IIa**:



IIa

wherein:

R^6 and R^9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

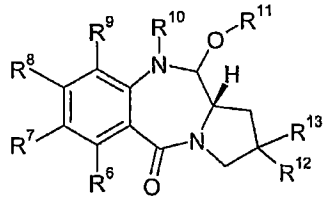
R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C_{1-12} alkyl, C_{3-20} heterocyclyl and C_{5-20} aryl groups;

R^7 and R^8 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo,

or the compound is a dimer with each monomer being of formula (**I**), where the R^7 groups or R^8 groups of each monomers form together a dimer bridge having the formula -X-R"-X- linking the monomers, where R" is a C_{3-12} alkylene group, which chain may be interrupted

by one or more heteroatoms and/or aromatic rings, and each X is independently selected from O, S, or NH;
or any pair of adjacent groups from R^6 to R^9 together form a group -O-$(CH_2)_p$-O-, where p is 1 or 2;
R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group;
R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group;
R^2 is a labile leaving group; and
R^{12} and R^{13} together form =O.

26. A method according to claim 25, wherein the compound of formula **IIa** is synthesised from a compound of formula **IIb**:



IIb

wherein said compound of formula **IIb** has R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9, R^{10} and R^{11} defined according to claim 25, and for said compound of formula **IIb** R^{12} is O-R^{14}, and R^{13} is H; and
R^{14} is an oxygen protecting group orthogonal to R^{11}.

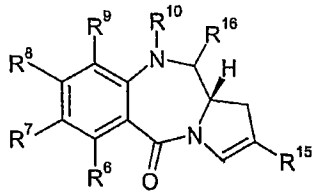
27. A method according to claim 26, wherein the compound of formula **IIa** is synthesised using an oxidation reaction performed under Swern conditions, or a method involving the TPAP or the Dess Martin reagents.

28. A method according to any one of claims 25 to 27, wherein when R^2 in the compound of formula **I** is $-OSO_2CH_3$, $-OSO_2(C_nF_{2n+1})$ where n = 0, 1 or 4, or $-OSO_2R^S$ where R^S is an optionally substituted phenyl group, then said compound of formula **I** is synthesised by using a treatment step with the appropriate R^2 anhydride.

29. A method according to any one of claims 25 to 27, wherein when R^2 in the compound of formula **I** is -I or -Br, then said compound of formula **I** is synthesised by using a reaction step involving hydrazine and iodine or bromine.

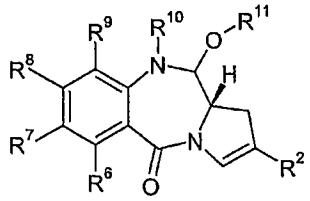
30. A method according to any one of claims 25 to 27, wherein when R^2 in the compound of formula **I** is -Cl, then said compound of formula **I** is synthesised by using a reaction step involving phosphorous oxychloride.

31. A method of synthesising a compound of formula **III**:



III

from a compound of formula **I**:



I

wherein

R^6 and R^9 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo;

R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C_{1-12} alkyl, C_{3-20} heterocyclyl and C_{5-20} aryl groups;

R^7 and R^8 are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH_2, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me_3Sn and halo,

or the compound is a dimer with each monomer being of formula (**I**), where the R^7 groups or R^8 groups of each monomers form together a dimer bridge having the formula -X-R"-X- linking the monomers, where R" is a C_{3-12} alkylene group, which chain may be interrupted by one or more heteroatoms and/or aromatic rings, and each X is independently selected from O, S, or NH;

or any pair of adjacent groups from R^6 to R^9 together form a group $-O-(CH_2)_p-O-$, where p is 1 or 2;

R^{10} is a carbamate-based nitrogen protecting group;

R^2 is a labile leaving group;

R^{16} is either O-R^{11}, where R^{11} is an oxygen protecting group, or OH, or R^{10} and R^{16} together form a double bond between N10 and C11; and R^{15} is R.

32. A method according to claim 31, wherein the synthesis of said compound of formula **III** uses a palladium catalysed coupling step.

33. A method according to claim 32, wherein the palladium catalyst is $Pd(PPh_3)_4$, $Pd(OCOCH_3)_2$, $PdCl_2$ or $Pd(dba)_3$.

34. A method according to either claim 32 or claim 33, wherein the coupling reaction is performed under microwave conditions.

35. A method according to any one of claims 32 to 34, wherein the palladium catalyst is solid supported.